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POET SKIES,

AND OTHER

Experiments in Versification,

BY

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Mrs Floride Clement Lea ✓

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THE following Essays in the composition of verse are the unstudied efforts of a young authoress, unlearned and inexperienced in the poetic art, as its rules have been prescribed by Horace and other authorities. They manifest, however, in the judgment of the friends who, without consulting her, have undertaken to present them in this unpretending form, a vigor of thought, a power of description, a vein of humor, and a devotional purity, elevation and soundness of sentiment which raise them much above the mediocrity which marks a great deal of what in so-called poetry, owes its reputation chiefly to the names of its authors. The illustrations are from sketches by a friend of the authoress, of her own sex, and reflect well the spirit of the lines they accompany.

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POEMS.



Poet Skies.

SPENSER, thou'rt the dawn's red sky,
Half in shade, though day is nigh:
Revealing secrets of the night—
Many shock, some please the sight.
Here rich mines of golden ore,
From which all have swell'd their store;
There, on rugged rocks entwine
Graceful garlands of the vine;
And the opening flowers yield
Sweets from many a virgin field.
Dost beguile the pilgrim band
Through a wild, oft weary land.

WORDSWORTH, thou art like the sky
When 'tis clear, serene and high,
Leading us to lofty thought,
We, by thee, to look are taught,
From calm nature to her God ;
And to feel the earth he trod,
Is a temple meet for praise.
Thou dost strive our hearts to raise—
Showing us how Heav'n, in all,
Seeks our careless souls to call.
Mountains point and streams reflect,—
All things guide us, and direct.

SHELLEY, thou art 'neath a sky,
Whence is shut the light from high.
Thou dost grope in darkness, though
Earthly fires, flitting, glow
O'er the labyrinthine maze,
Where thy bright, lost spirit, strays.
Day of intellect, alone,
For moral night, can not atone.
Shock'd though charm'd by what we see,
We deplore, we pity thee !
Like a fallen star thou art,
Dost nor light, nor warmth impart.

BURNS, I see in thee a sky,
When bright Spring doth cradled lie
On each dewy heather-fell,
As sweet winds, in music, tell
Tales of love, and simple joy,—
Nature's language, dost employ:—
Melting into tearful rain,
Breaking into smiles again !
Though rough gusts at times may blow,
Still thought-blossoms round thee grow.
Thou dost healthful freshness bring
Where the world its blight doth fling.

TENNYSON, art like the sky,
When the god of day, on high,
Rises from his rosy bed
And his smiles on earth doth shed,
Painting dewy nature bright
With his pencilings of light.
Higher still he mounts, behold,
Making closed leaves unfold,
Warming intellect to life,—
Waking feeling's noble strife;—
Beacon-mind, shalt stand through time,
Type of this great age sublime.

HEMANS, thou a moon-lit sky,
Where the full orb rides on high,
Shedding floods of holy light
From blue heaven's starry height.
Here and there, the soft clouds seem
Charged with lightning's lambent gleam.
Pensive, melancholy, deep,
Thou the soul doth gently steep
In a full effulgent glow,
Looking down on all below
With a woman's tender eye,
We to thee for comfort fly.

COLERIDGE, like a foggy sky,
Sometimes low and sometimes high :
Often dark and misty, oft
Lit by moonlight fancies soft ;
Lurid now, and now sublime,
Scarce the same at any time.
Though grand figures vaguely loom,
We shall strive to pierce the gloom,
Oft in vain, for dim and pale,
Light falls on thy mystic veil ;
With thy flickering torch dost find
Haunted cells in every mind.

MOORE, thou art the glowing sky,
Ere the sun to rest doth hie,
Tinted with the rainbow hues ;
Every scene thy touch endues
With some charm, some pleasing trace
Of thine own unrivalled grace !
Gorgeous, rosy, bright, or warm,
Every cloud takes some new form :—
Lovely, airy, beautiful,
Wondrous, or fanciful,—
Sometimes tender, sometimes gay,
Thou dost while the time away.

PÖE, thou seemest the lurid sky,
While the clouds mid darkness fly,
Lit alone by lightning gleams—
Bringing wild delirious dreams.
Sweetest music now dost wake,
Now the cords dost rudely break !
Thunders mutter, roll and growl,—
Winds with untold horror howl,—
Wondrous sounds fall on the ear
With the potent spell of fear ;
Morbid, fascinating, wild—
God's own image hast defiled.

HOOD, art like an April sky,
When the fitful breeze blows by ;
Rising to a joyous gale,
Dying with a sobbing wail,—
Often bringing clouds so dense,
Hope sinks, like a false pretence.
Quick as thought they break, and see
How the sad drops seem to be
Gems, that sparkle rare and bright
In the gladsome, smiling light !
Grave, pathetic, madly gay,
Laughing thine own tears away !

BRYANT, as a dreamy sky,
When the Indian summer's nigh ;
Thou dost on the mellow haze,
Contemplative, turn thy gaze.
And, hast through the realms of thought,
Not in vain, for wisdom sought.
Dost conceal what e'er would shock,—
Rounding e'en the jagged rock.
Passionless thy soul, and calm,
Striving still to pour a balm
On the turbid spirit. Rest
Thou dost bring the weary spirit.

POPE, a bow-spann'd, dripping sky,
When the winds do blow and sigh
With a careless melody,
In a weary monody !
But rich fields of thought revive,
And with all this patt'ring thrive.
Though the chilling, nipping air,
Blights, at times, the flowers fair ;
And with cloudy discontent
O'er the world thy brow is bent—
While they grieve that this should be,
Thinking minds delight in thee !
In thy classic heights of mind,
Pagan all thy gods we find.

BYRON, thou night's sombre sky,
Lit the red volcano by !
When black clouds are driven on,
When weird forms do ride upon
Every bitter, scorching blast,
Wildly, darkly flitting past !
But the blaze that lights the sky
Leaves but cinders, hot and dry.
Wondrous mind ! perverted heart !
Master of thy noble art !
Few like thee, both strong and bold,
Can deep passions sway and hold.

MILTON, thou the polar sky,
Where doth loom, sublime, on high,
Northern lights, serene and cold.
Thou the glory dost unfold
Of high heaven's star-gemm'd dome,
Where thy thoughts, inspired, roam,
Like great constellations, bound
To one grand, unchanging round.
God, their fix'd, their polar star,
Draws them from the earth afar,
Sounding, through eternal days,
Glorious hymns of lofty praise.

SHAKESPEARE, as in noon-day sky
Rides the sun, the zenith nigh,
Shalt, from thine empyrean, see
Countless ages bow to thee ;
While thy genius, peerless, bright,
Shall diffuse its glorious light.
By that brilliancy untold,
Though the gaze at first be bold,
Dazzled and abashed, we turn,
Not to criticise, but learn.
Dost delight, instruct, amuse,
Warmth and healthful life infuse.

Compensation.

WE recognize thy goodness, Lord,
Thy loving, gracious care,
That compensates in each life-stage
The ills we meet with here.

The young have energy and strength,
To climb the up-hill road,
The old have easy downward slopes
When bending 'neath life's load.

Unsteady spring, whose showers light
Yield to the fostering sun,
Sere fall, the time of memories,
Toil o'er, and work all done.

The summer,—duties hard, and cares,
But sweet fulfilment too.
The grain in forming, needs not rain
But ready suns, and dew.

The morning twilight brings fresh hope
The evening shadows rest,
The noon-day, light, and faithful trust,
Yea, all are richly blest !

The Cockatrice.

YES, I sought her, though they warned me
To beware the Cockatrice ;
But I longed to prove my power,
And withstand her artifice.

First, I thought I only watched her,
As a study, something strange,
Soon I found she interested,
“So unlike the common range.”

When she saw I dared to brave her,
And her potent charms and wiles,
She was piqued, and turned upon me
Her most bright and winning smiles.

She amused me, she bewitched me
With her fascinating ways ;
And her flashing black eyes dazzled,
Deadly as the lightning blaze.



But I thought I saw them soften,
Only when *I* looked in them,
So I yielded to the 'torrent,
'Till its force I could not stem.

Then I said the world belies her,
There are depths it cannot sound,
Where, beneath the sparkling surface,
Gems are hid, that I have found.

While she made me think I swayed her
With a power all mine own,
She was sporting in the glamour,
That, o'er me, her spells had thrown.

With a thousand bonds she held me,
By her cheek's rich crimson hue,
By her snake like coils and tresses,
Those false lips I thought so true !

By her nobly moulded figure,
By her wit and matchless grace ;
By her mobile play of features,
By the arts that none could trace.

When I could not hide the passion
That had brought me to her feet,
Then she spurned me, sneering, scorning,
For such madness this was meet !

How the burning fever courses
Through my veins, like molten lead !
Still those baleful eyes, they haunt me,
As I toss upon my bed.

Take them off me ! Take them off me !
With their cold, disdainful gaze ;
Oh they pierce my aching bosom,
And my throbbing brain they craze.

Fire! Fire!

FIRE! Fire! wake and follow,
Hear the trumpets deep and hollow,
Braying out a harsh defiance
To the darkness and the silence.
Hark! the watchman's rattle springing,
How the running feet are ringing;
As from every side men muster,
Round the burning pile to cluster.
All with eager awe-struck faces;
Startled from their resting places.
Some half-dressed are crouching yonder,
Gazing blank in vacant wonder;
With impotent desperation,
Looking on their desolation.
Leave of life-long treasures taking,
While their homeless hearts seem breaking;
Some are fainting, others crying,
Some in panic madly flying;
These, in dull despair are sinking,
Those in abject terror shrinking;

How the gloating light enfolds them,
As with potent spell it holds them ;
Half with awful admiration,
Half with stony desperation.
In they rush, the rooms to rifle,
Bearing off a worthless trifle ;
Under blind fear-born delusion,
Then return in wild confusion,
For some dear, forgotten token,
Half is burned and half is broken.
Fire ! Fire ! hear it crashing,
Higher, higher, see it flashing ;
List ! the clanging bells are tolling,
How 'tis sinking, how 'tis swelling,
And alarums wildly pealing,
As for still more help appealing.
See the mighty engines spouting,
Hear the frantic masses shouting,
Each to bolder efforts urging,
But the fire waves still are surging,
Far beyond the strength of mortals,
Storming heaven's very portals.
Clouds reflect the red, red gleaming,
Rugged flames on high are streaming,
Now the whole dread scene revealing,
Now the darkness half concealing ;

How it flickers, brightly flaring,
As a demon's eye balls glaring ;
Roused by some foul incantation,
Mad with fiendish exultation ;
Thrusting out great tongues of fire,
Hissing, climbing, higher, higher ;
Nearer seem the flames approaching,
On fresh fuel now encroaching ;
See with stealthy steps 'tis creeping,
Or with bold defiance leaping,
All that lies before it sweeping,
Ruin on destruction heaping.
Every moment seems an hour,
As before its might they cower ;
Scarcely breathing, scarcely thinking,
While each heart seems coldly shrinking.
Now it puts forth all its powers,
Throwing sparks in meteor showers.
Hear the heavy timbers cracking,
As it rolls on, never slacking.
Look, the whole mass seems to quiver,
And with one long groan to shiver ;
Like a mortal creature reeling,
When the last death stroke is dealing.
Now the scorching air grows hotter,
See the blazing structure totter ;

Then a cry of stand from under,
Then a crash like deaf'ning thunder ;
Palls of smoke, and sparks ascending,
Seem with stars and cloud-wreck blending.
Darkness over all is falling,
Silence every tongue entralling ;
Then a movement in the masses,
And the spell of horror passes.
One deep sigh and they recover,
Come away, for all is over.



That "Blessed" Sewing Machine.

"So you've bought a machine ! I'm so glad," says a friend :
"Now, for help with my work, upon you, I'll depend,
It will get through the sewing, I'll warrant my dear,
In less than a week, that once took you a year.
Here, I brought some things to run through, for I know,
That with those *blessed comforts*, its nothing to sew.
I left all for you to arrange and to baste,
It's a *trifle* to do. Good bye. Pray make haste !"

A "trifle," and "nothing," I wish that was true,
 For she will blame if I can't, never thank if I do ;—
 Showing plainly by looks, if she don't say it quite,
 That she's not even pleased, and there's none of it right !
 People think my machine an automaton, or
 That I'm one myself, else they'd spare me, I'm sure :—
 Just winding it up will not make the thing go,
 And an imp—not an angel—oft guides it, I know.
 Then I'm nervous to-day, so I'm sure it won't run,
 And I've got something else that I want to get done.
 Ah, well, let me set it in order, and see
 If it won't, for this once, have some pity on me !
 Snap ! snap ! oh, the tension's too tight, I suppose.
 Crash ! crash ! It's too loose, by the loops that it throws.
 And this cloth is so stiff that the thread cuts and wears,—
 But then, when its flimsy, it pulls through and tears.
 This needle is bent, so the seam wont run straight,
 And I've turned up the point of that one on the plate.
 This *must* be too large—but that's surely too small—
 What can be the matter ? It wont work at all !
 The shuttle is empty, perhaps. No, its not !
 The thread may be caught, or else come to a knot.
 That wiry *glacé* 's the very worst kind,—
 Tis half off the spool, around everything twined.
 That's fixed. Now, what breaks it ? I cannot conceive !
 The loop click is right, the hook's smooth, I believe.

But no one could sew with such horrible thread :
And as to this clatter, 'tis splitting my head !
'Tis shrieking for oil,—I must take off the plate,—
Does working work everyone up to this state ?
But where is the screw-driver ? Not vanished, I pray,
With the gauge and the wrench ! Something goes every day.
This stitch is too short, for tis cutting the stuff ;
Too long now,—tis never, alas, just enough !
I feel all the stitches it makes—in my back,—
And it aches, 'till I'm sure when I straighten 'twill crack ;
This seam is all drawn,—that stretches,—Oh me !
If this is a blessing what *can* a curse be ?
The band is too loose, for 'tis slipping around,
Must, every two inches,—new troubles be found ?
I'm bothered to death with this troublesome work !
There, I've broken the needle, by giving that jerk !
But I'm sure it is more than Job's temper could stand,
And I'd got through much more, if I'd done it by hand.
The basting, adjusting, and fixing, consume,
What time is not wasted in fretting, and fume.
To say that I *hate* this machine, is too mild ;
What's that ? I must stop for its driving me wild.

Cough, Cough, Cough!

Cough, till your haggard eyes start in your head.
Cough, till you wearily wish you were dead.
Cough, till your chest feels all wounded and torn.
Cough, till your figure is wasted and worn.
Cough, till you think you must surely go wild.
Cough, till you've scarcely the strength of a child.
Cough, till your cheek becomes hollow and sere.
Cough, till the hot lurid hectic is there.
Cough, till you gasp for each laboring breath.
Cough, till all damp with the cold dews of death.
Cough, till bewildered and wild with despair,
Cough, till rejoiced the end is so near.

Yes.

IN honest gaze of hazel eyes,
In tender depths of blue,
In eagle glancing gray, and those
Of evil sable hue ;
In each I've felt a charm, but thine,
Though seeming none of these,
Are far more beautiful than all,
More potent still to please ;
The spreading pupil 'neath the lid,
Glowing like some deep set gem,
Where oriental splendors slept,
Until my life woke them.
Now hazing with a tender mist,
Now all ablaze with light,
Now gazing solemnly on high,
Or flecked with sparkles bright ;
The soul, the heart, the mind by turns,
Speak in those wondrous eyes ;
I care not for thine other charms,
'Tis these alone I prize.

Lift then thy veiling lashes long,
So let me read thy soul,
And what thy spirit says to mine,
Oh ! seek not to control.



“Strong Minded Women.”

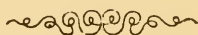
Written for —, January, 1867.

You ask me to write you some verses, my friend,
I'll try, in the hope that the muses will send
Some slight inspiration, to help me along,
For in writing to order, I never was strong.
I do wish to please you, (not tease,) tho' I fear,
'Twill be hard to make you believe that I care ;
As these verses can only as negative pass,
They'll disprove me a “positive woman”—a class
That I most do abhor. There's nothing to me
So weak as the “strong minded women” we see.
A masculine woman, deny it who can—
Is the next meanest thing to effeminate man.

Our strength 's in our weakness ; doubt not, if we try—
However abortive the effort,—to vie
With the “lords of creation,” they’ll soon put us down
Below where we are, with well merited frown ;
Now I’d never surrender one privilege, for
The “rights” that I hav’nt, can’t use, aye and more,
Don’t wish to be given ! ’Tis granted us now,
On the plea of our weakness, (a good one I trow,)
To sit by the fire, on cold winter days,
While the brunt of hard work—just custom—still lays
On the hardier sex, who doubts if we get
The “rights” on which some foolish women are set.
That shadow of substance they blindly destroy,
And nature forbids we should ever enjoy.
We’ll have to go out in the rough world, and brave
What we are not meant, made, or fit for ; I crave
To know who is ready to do this,—and own,
In life, I’m not willing “to go it alone.”
Now putting aside all this *ismatic* trash,
I cannot see why the two sexes should clash.
They have what we want, we have what they need,
We should love to follow, as they love to lead.
If females desire to manage, we see
The subversion of all that God destined should be.
The most perfect of women are those who with grace,
And dignity, too, still keep in their place.

Let each of us try to be best of our kind,
Not aping the others, for that we must find
Is taking the shortest and very best way
To bring degradation, unhappiness, aye,
The loss, too, of all that true woman should prize :
Thus giving mankind a good right to despise
Our womanhood, which, unperverted and pure,
With those sweet Christian graces God gave to ensure—
If we use them aright—their love and respect,
And make it their pleasure to guide and protect
With their minds and their arms, both stronger by far.
Oh, hard-minded sisters, leave things as they are.
Nor kick down the pedestal under our feet,
Involving us all in your own just defeat.
If they force on *me* "rights," against which I protest,
I'll make this one use of the powers they vest,
And move, if men can ^{not} change natures with us,
(Now do you believe we can mend matters thus?)
That they use their prerogative, strength, to withstand
The evil their weakness has brought on the land.
Thus put in their place those that think it is fine
To change all laws human as well as divine.
They will gain far more love and respect by this course,
In spite of the outcry 'twill cause to enforce.
After this, if they press me to vote, (which I doubt,)
I'll solemnly rise, and I'll vote myself out

Of a sphere in which they, by permitting this fact,
Have proved that themselves are unfitted to act.
Shall the weaker brave dangers that conquer the strong?
Will not the swift current that sweeps *them* along,
Overwhelm our efforts to stem it, and cast
Us wrecks on life's shore, as warnings at last.
Oh let us still tread where our mothers have trod,
Leaving things as ordained by our nature and God.



Vain Trust.

We wandered on the shore, mine own, and I,
And as she watched the wave,
I saw the glad light fading from her eye,—
She shuddered, and looked grave.

I drew her to my side, and fondly asked,
“Why art thou so sad I pray?”
Nay, darling, smile on me again, and chase
That gloomy shade away.

Look at the sea ; her placid breast doth heave
With gentle swell, as though
She loved the glowing clouds that mirror them,
And murmur soft and low.

“Yes, but I feel a boding gloom,” she said,
“As on the sea I gaze,
And when as now she *seems* at rest, more dark
The sombre shadow weighs.

“I think but of her treachery to those
Who, trusting to her wiles,
Have fallen victims to them, this is why
I hate her when she smiles.

“But when she rises in her wrath sublime,
I gaze upon her might
With solemn awe and terror, still I own
It is a glorious sight.”

I fondly boasted ; “But thou shouldst not fear,
When I, my love, am by ;
Thou knowest all dangers I could brave for thee,
And with God's help, defy.”

“Nay, chide me not, I’ll dread the sea no more,
But place my trust in thee,”
Then leaning on my arm, she smiled, and fixed
Her loving eyes on me.

And thus we strayed, forgetting all beside,
Along the rock bound shore ;
Nor heeded we the gathering clouds, nor yet
The winds deep sullen roar.

Nor marked we how the beach we trod now grew
More narrow as we went,
And that between the over hanging cliffs,
And ocean, we were pent.

Until a jutting rock, that barred the way,
Awoke us, and aghast,
We saw the tide had ridden o’er the beach
That we had blindly passed.

And soon the fast encircling waves would sweep
The narrow strip of sand
On which we stood, our fearful fate seemed sure,
Hemmed in on every hand.

The storm broke forth in fury wild, and loud
The deaf'ning thunder crashed,
The lightning blinded us, and by the blast
The mountain surf was lashed.

"Oh save me!" cried the panic stricken girl,
Not long I stood at bay ;
But all in vain, I strove to scale the cliff
'Gainst which now beat the spray.

And thus I lost much precious time, alas !
While higher dashed each wave,
Storm driven, and the elements more wild,
Each moment seemed to rave.

Then earnestly I prayed to God, and spoke
Some words to cheer the maid,
How he might save us yet ; but clinging close,
"I trust in thee," she said.

At last, I saw one hope, alone, was left,
Though small it seemed to be,
So with my precious burden in my arms
I sprang into the sea.

For could we pass that jutting crag, I knew
We would be saved, and though
The trial seemed but madness, still I hoped
God would the strength bestow.

I struggled with the storm, and turned at length
The fearful point of rock,
"Thy strength hath saved me," louder yelled the blast,
As though her words to mock.

Almost exhausted now, I scarce could breast
The fury of the deep,
Dashed by the mighty waves, against the cliff,
Which beetled, jagg'd and steep.

Stunned by the fearful shocks, at last, I sank,
And then I knew no more,
'Till with returning consciousness, I found
Myself stretched on the shore.

There, locked in death, lay by my side, the one
I would have died to save,
And still her clasped hands, stretched toward me, seemed
My help, not God's, to crave.

'Tis Fall.

'Tis Fall ! 'Tis Fall ! with its bracing days,
When nature seems singing deep hymns of praise,
And life is joy,

Without alloy.

You shiver in doors, 'tis warm in the sun,
Come, warm your blood with a merry run.

Oh let's away,

'Tis a shame to stay

Cooped up in the house, on such days as these,
Come feast your eyes, on the tints of the trees.

With joyous sound,

The frosty ground

Doth crisply snap ; or, with noisy tread
We rouse the leaves in their wintry bed.

All things are bright

With mellow light.

Drink in long draughts of the morning air,
'Twill raise your spirits, and drive away care,

Yes laugh, and sing ;

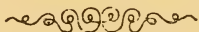
And think of Spring !

Forget dark winter's desolate space,
Now here is a pool, look in at your face,
 Not pinched and blue,
 With winter's hue,
But glowing with genial red and white.
Throw off restraint, that's right! that's right!
 Now brightly glance
 Your eyes, and dance.
You pant! well, here's a sheltered nook,
And there, by the side of yon romping brook,
 That log will do,
 To seat us two.
What a beautiful scene this is, and see
This moss that covers this fallen tree,
 And there on high,
 That painter's sky,
Is a treat in itself. Those leaf tints seem,
The gorgeous work of an artist's dream.
 I knew you'd say,
 When got away
From the dismal house, that you thank me, now,
I read my thanks in your radiant brow.

Diana.

DIANA, goddess chaste,
Thou most art to my taste
Of all the heathen dreams.
To me, it always seems,
Thy spirit still doth haunt
The woods, where thou wert wont
To chase the timid deer.
I often think I hear
Thee bounding, light, away,
When wrapped in dreams, I stray
Deep in the forest glade,
A moonbeam in the shade,
Oft seems thy form, at rest,
In snowy tunic dressed,
Its noble beauty chains
My soul, until it wanes
Beneath my spell bound gaze,
Into the silver rays,
Which thine own orb serene
Doth shed upon the scene.—

Diana chaseresse,
In forest wilderness,
I feel thy presence still,
My heart it seems to fill
With all that's pure and high,
Watch over me, for I
Almost do worship thee,—embodied chastity.



Autumn Bird Song.

ONCE more, my ling'ring feet
Crush the falling leaves,
Once more, my loving hand,
Fall's bright garland weaves,
Wains laden high, I meet,
Bringing in last sheaves,
While nature's feathered band meets
Before it leaves.

Meets, summer lays to sing,
Ah! let them be gay,
Pour forth but joyous notes,
This last summer day,

Showers of song ye fling
Like a fountain's spray,
While your rich carols float,
Up and far away !

Out of your soul's excess,
Sing ye high and well,
Wreathing my list'ning heart,
With your strongest spell,
Oh ! help me to repress
Heavy sighs that swell,
Spirits of song, we part,
Sing your best farewell.

SONG.

Hope comes with budding days,
Sweet, ecstatic, bright,
Joy in the summer's prime,
Full of rich delight,
Rest, with the autumn haze,
In the mellow light,
But, with dark winter time,
Blessings take their flight !

Fading Away.

E'EN as a flower fadeth, so she passed away,
With more of heaven, less of earth,

About her, day by day ;
As sun rays into moon beams softly blend,
And substance is in shadow lost,

Unto her life's calm end.

Her soul-lit beauty unimpaired, remained,
Although the flush and healthful glow

Of life had long since waned,
Into that pure, but all too lovely hue,
That looks decay. Her gentle eye,

Ethereal, and blue,
Grew more serene, ere yet her soul was riven,
From its slight hold on earth, it seemed
More fitted, far, for heaven.



The Cypress Glen.

ART thou alone, gay one,
Bathed in the Autumn sun?
Bright days are nearly done;
Winter soon here!

Merry thy blue eyes shine,
Glad is that face of thine,
Full joy in every line;
Sorrow is near!

Pale, those rich blossoms by
The gorgeous sunset sky,
Darkness, and storms are nigh;
Cold grows the air!

Hark! I have that to tell,
Shall, like hope's fun'ral knell,
Chill thee with icy spell;
Listen to me!

Look in my haggard face,
Where time hath left its trace,
One of Egyptian race
In me behold !

Wronged, driven to and fro ;
Hated for what we know ;
Sweet, sweet, revenge doth grow,
Toward thy kind !

Doth wait thy lover, say ?
Still thou must come away,
Nay, but thou shalt obey ;
Shalt go with me !

Throw down those flowers, so,
Shall all thy brightness go ?
Yield place to brooding woe !
Haste, for 'tis late !

Come, 'neath the gloomy shade,
By the dark cypress made,
There in the haunted glade
Listen to me !

Sit on the dead leaves, there,
By that rock, cold and bare ;
Breathe in the heavy air ;
Damp as a vault !

Look, yonder coils a snake,
That our steps awake,
Ha ! doth it make thee quake ?
Men are as false !

Slowly yon vulture wheels,
Gorged from his loathsome meals ;
Hear how the thunder peals ;
Fast drawing near !

Wild shrieks the blast, aloud,
From yonder heavy cloud,
See how the trees are bowed ;
Coward, dost fear ?

Deep doth that black stream run,
Hid from the holy sun,
Here was a dark deed done ;
Listen to me !

Thou wert a mere child, when,
Burning with hate, two men,
Met here, within this glen,
Met here, alone.

One was of noble mould,
Rash, unsuspecting, bold;—
False was this foe, and cold,
Though fair to see.

Both loved one woman, who
Loved best, the brave, and true ;
Jealous his rival grew ;
Bent on revenge.

By hints, with malice fraught,
He, of her lover, sought
To poison every thought ;
Why did she hear ?

Darkly suspicion fell,
Doing its work too well,—
Bidding her choice farewell ;
She told him all.

He tried, first, to explain,
She heard him with disdain,
Finding this hope was vain ;
 He sought his foe.

Half wild, he wrote "each lie,
That thou hast told, deny,
Or thou, or I, must die.
 I challenge thee !"

"I take thy challenge, then,
Come to the Cypress Glen,
With swords, alone at ten ;
 I will be there !

Both came, one went away,
Near here, he dared not stay,
Whispers of foul play ;
 Threatened his life.

Who were these men ? Now hear !
Why dost thou shrink with fear ?
Hast guessed why thou shouldst care !
 Listen to me !

Near struck that lightning flash,
Wild was that thunder crash,
Hear how the rain doth plash ;
Blown by the blast.

Art pale, and stunned with fright
Dost dread this fearful night ?
Or dost thou feel the blight
Deep in thy soul ?

Child, hast thou never thought,
Strange that thy lover sought
Secrecy ? Say doth naught
Tell thee 'tis wrong ?

Canst meet his glistening eye,
When urging thee to fly ?
Dost not, when he is nigh,
Feel he is false ?

He loves thee, pretty thing,
But more, the gold thou'lt bring,
Lone orphan heart, didst cling
To such a man ?

Girl, in thy suitor know ?
Thine only brother's foe ;
His hand 'twas dealt the blow,
Left thee alone !

Here was his victim found,
Killed by a trait'rous wound ;
Thou thoughtst he was drown'd ;
They told thee so !

All sought to shield thy youth,
From this too dreadful truth ;
Best had they told thee, sooth
Better for thee !

Not oft *I* pity, where
My words have brought despair,
Still, though why should *I* care ?
I pity thee.

Look Upward.

ART longing, ever longing,
For some happiness unknown,
Or mourning, ever mourning
For the gracious moments flown,
Loving smiles that never more
Shall unlock thy heart's closed door,
Precious hands, once clasped in thine,
In thy life's sweet blossom time.
These dost long, and mourn for ever,
Vain ! on earth shalt find them never.

Is it dreary, very dreary,
Where thy lot is cast below ?
Art thou weary, very weary,
Of the journey thou must go ?
Is it dark, where thou dost tread ?
Pray that heaven's light be shed,
Happiness has left thee here,—
Look above, behold it there !
All these trials thou didst need,
Unto God, thy soul to lead !

Content thee! ah content thee!

With thy greater blessings past,
Repent thee! yea, repent thee,
For despising those thou hast,
Canst not hope that joys will bloom
From the cradle to the tomb.
Thy day's curfew bell has tolled,
Nerve thee for the night wind cold.
Some are born in winter time;—
Others come in summer's prime.

Push onward! ever onward!

Keep the straight and narrow way,
Look upward! ever upward!

'Trust in God, and watch and pray.
Seeds of death in every breast,
Growing till the shadows rest
O'er the grave, so cold, and dark,
Whence doth spring the immortal spark.
Wait with patience, soon 'tis done,
Happy if the crown be won!

Address to the ‘‘Cooters’’ of H——.

THE Cooter Logs, the chosen place,
Where village loafers meet,
To sun themselves on tilted chairs,
With high exalted feet.

Sure dials, they—to keep the sun
Upon each lazy back,
They slowly edge themselves around,
Stagnation’s moss grown pack !

They “news” retail, and gossip more
Than women ever do ;
And scan *them*, as they pass along,
From bonnet down to shoe.

They whittle, chew, discuss, and smoke,
Who know as much as they ?
And, ever and anon, adjourn,
To soak their seasoned clay.

And on some worthless game, they waste
The little that they make ;
And still upon the slightest cause,
The third commandment break.

They grumble over stocks and times,—
The weather and the crops.
'Tis strange, from such a ceaseless mill,
So little wisdom drops.

Old Rip Van Winkle here had found
Small change in thirty years.
The scions play at Cooter style,
Upon their sires' chairs.

A worthy occupation, this,
Creation's lords for you !
Pray would it suit your dignity
To do the knitting too ?

Our Festival.

"*In Memoriam*," June —, 1867.

I'm thinking of a scene,
Sunk deep in forest green.
A spot of beauty rare,—
A scene, Elysian fair!
Recall it now to thee,
Back from the past, with me.

'Twas in the early June,
We held, beneath the moon,
That reign'd in fullest state,
A lovely, rural *fete*.
'There ev'ry scene was charm'd,
And coldest fancy warm'd.

See 'neath the mottled beam,
The tents like snow drifts gleam
All deck'd with garlands fair,
With sweetest blossoms rare,
And maidens robed in white,
Glide from the shade, to light.

Where shadows lie most dark,
The lantern's little spark
Shows like a fire-fly
Beneath the moon-lit sky!
And soft winds come and go,
And whisper, as they blow.

While music sinks and swells,
Is lost among the dells,
Or echoed from the hills,
Where ceaseless whip-poor-wills.
Lead from the lonely height
The chorus of the night.

We linger, talking low;—
Slow wand'ring to and fro.
How fast each hour's past,
How quickly comes the last!
Our very souls are stirred,
The heart speaks in each word.

But pause, and look around!
There lies the holy ground,
Where peacefully, at rest,
The moon light on each breast,
Now sleep the loved and lost,
The weary tempest toss'd.

Our gray old church just seen
Through sombre oaken screen,
A solemn watch doth keep,
O'er their eternal sleep.
In life they sought her care,
In death she still is near.

Dear church, would we could think
Each pleasure, thus a link
To bind our souls to thee !
Oh while we live, may we
Rest 'neath thy guard, as those
Who round thee now repose !

Perchance, in years to come,
When wand'ers far from home,
Our sweetest thoughts may be
Of days, dear friend, when we
With voice and heart-felt prayer
Together worship'd there.

Love in a Cot.

A TRUCE to such nonsense as "love in a cot,"
To be shaken by chills in some damp little spot,
In a "vale," by the side of a "babbling brook!"
I cannot bear babble, and as for a "nook,"
When I look from the window, I want to see more
Than the little grass plat, just in front of the door.
And I don't want to play at *two* "jacks in a box,"
Against whose low lid, one's poor head always knocks.
Such places are sure to belittle the mind,
With their "clustering" vines that perpetually wind,
Round "arbors," and "casements," and porches, and *that*,
I hate all such spider decoys, and that's flat!
They rot out the shingles, and shut out the light.
Then house, trees, and fences must all be washed white,
To suit the neat rustic (hem!) style of the place.
Your neighbors, a few of the clod-hopper race,
Who "drap in" to talk of the "crap" with your spouse,
While their wives tell you which has gone dry of the cows.
How "Mandy was fretted all night by the fleas,"
And lard all their news with "says I's," and "says he's."

Of course in a "cottage," one "help" is enough,
You do half the work, though hands red and rough,
Are not as romantic as one might suppose,
And tending the garden, will freckle the nose.
The pig-sty and cow-shed, are just in the yard,
And poultry and dogs will not be debarr'd
The run of the house, which 'tis useless to try
Keeping tidy, and soon you give up with a sigh.
White dresses, and furbelows, ruffles and crimp,
Soon under this *regime*, get dirty and limp.

And then come a parcel of bare-footed brats
With clothes to be darn'd, that seem gnaw'd by the rats.
And a colicky baby, in yellow—not white—
That sharpens your temper by squalling all night.
Your husband is not just as spruce, as of old,
But looks rough, and coarse, if the truth must be told.
Nor are you unchang'd, as you own with a sigh
When the likeness of *you*, as you *were*, meets your eye.
While now grossly fat, or scraggy and lean,
You've lost all your pride,—scarcely care to keep clean,
Have sunk to the drudge of a house-keeper, or
The "mother of Mr. Blank's children,"—no more.
How you stare with surprise at that yellow old sheet
Of clap trap love verses, you once thought "so sweet,"

And say to yourself, "I declare I can't see
How *he* ever wrote such soft nonsense to *me*."
No, "rural simplicity 's" not to my taste !
The polish within and without is defaced,
Too soon, by attrition with those who are rough,
In manner and mind. 'Tis vain-glorious stuff,
To say that we cannot be influenced so ;
No one is above it, I am not, I know.
It takes constant intercourse with the refined
And thoughtful, to keep one from slipping behind.
That it should not be so, is against heaven's laws,
To keep up the effect, when we give up the cause.
Disguise your chimera as much as you will,
Tis the Euphuist's dream of arcadia, still.
And why should we wish to be civilized, pray,
If we live in this very uncivilized way ?
Giving up all refinements, books, elegance, taste,
Working hard with the hands, while the mind goes to waste.
What use to know how, if one never does read ?
Such knowledge can only to discontent lead.
I want to keep up with the age, not fall back
To the mis-called "good times of old" crime was as black,
All ignorance darker, true chivalry rare,—
Human nature the same, at all times, every where

The New Year's Prayer.

LORD, hear my prayer to-day,

And let each month, that makes this new year old,
Find me still farther on the way,
That leads the christian to thy blessed fold.

Lord, make me thine to-day,

And give me strength to conquer every fault
That, like a lion in the way,
Shall strive to turn me back, or make me halt.

Lord, grant to me this day

A cheerful and contented heart, that I
May go rejoicing on my way
Trust to thy mercy, not from judgments fly.

Lord, give me strength to-day,

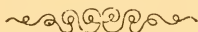
To make such good resolves, as with thy grace,
May help me on the holy way,
And from thy servant, turn thou not thy face.

Lord, make me feel to-day

Submissive to thy will, and though I crave
That happiness attend my way
Yet send me grief, if needs must be, to save.

Lord, give my heart to-day,
A stronger faith, more fervent love for thee
Teach thou my soul, the perfect way
And guide my prayers, that they accepted be.

Lord, I would ask to-day,
That thou would'st bless this year to all,
Who faint and sorrow on their way,
And let thy grace, on them, in showers fall.



The Flight of Time.

THE days and hours pass
Like shadows by
We sigh, alas ! alas !
Regretfully, and cry
“Dead—are they dead ?
So swiftly sped
So silent fled
So bright to die.”

But in their stead
Days still unborn
Will come, and every morn

Shall wipe the nights out from the sky.
Hot days the morning dews will dry.
Each dying-dolphin hue will fly,
Chased by another from on high.
Still other sun-sets shall pass by
 Returning whence they came
 Still changing, still the same—
And leave no trace
On nature's placid face,
 Yea, from their wonted place
 Nights shall efface
All,—all,—They fall and die,
But from their ashes where they lie
 They spring to life again.
And so it is with men,
On earth they stray
A little while, then lay
 Them down, perhaps, with fear,
But leave behind them every care.
For most, 'tis well
When sounds their knell,
'Tis well that death is near,
And graves are yawning every where,
The portals of the skies,
Whence they arise,

New born, to join the band
That people that bright land.
There, time will pass untold,
Unheeded, for behold
Eternity shall hold
All in its circling fold!
Not wearied by the strife of life,
Remorse, for all the barren course,
Of days misspent,
Of weeks, nay years, that went,
All wasted into night, unused,
Unnoticed, or abused.
We know that it is so,
That endless cycles flow,
Spent at Jehovah's feet,
Where, round the mercy seat
"The saints in glory meet,"
Uniting praises sweet,
In one continual round
Of harmony profound.
While fullest peace at last is found.
Ay! ay! to die, and lie
At rest forever, with the blest,
Yea, truly this is best.

My Cat Jack.

AN Jack ! my solemn old gray cat,
Both treacherous and sly,
Thou art a vicious untamed brute,
Why do I like thee, why ?

Thy step is stealthy, tiger like ;
Thy watchful, lurid eye,
Is deep and clear, but wicked too,
Why do I like thee, why ?

Thy soft gray fur shades into white,
With stripes of blackest dye,
But thou'rt a lazy, worthless cat,
Why do I like thee, why ?

Though strong enough to cope with rats,
Thou art no mouser, fie !
But only huntest harmless birds,
Why do I like thee, why ?

Thy graceful postures, on the rug,
Where thou art wont to lie,
Are matchless,—still, thou Jack-an-apes,
Why do I like thee, why?

Are cleanliness and holiness,
The same? ah no! I sigh;
For who more clean,—less good than thou?
Why do I like thee, why?

Thou handsome monster! many scars,
I ween, can testify,
That thou hast claws, oh ruthless cat!
Why do I like thee, why?

Because, what hardest is to gain,
That we all prize most high;
Though worthless oft, it matters not,
That is the reason why.

While shunning every one beside,
Thou in my lap will lie,
And, though thou dost not love *me* much,
That is the reason why.

We all court danger—See yon moth
The candle flitting nigh,
Though fatal oft, excitement charms,
That is the reason why.

Then thou'rt so feared, it suits my pride
—I must confess it, aye!—
To do what others dare not do,
That is the reason why.

What's certain loses half its charm,
Who's sure of thee? not I!
Though thou dost scratch, thou *canst* be kind.
That is the reason why.

Because I neither fear nor trust,
But wary watch thine eye,
Thou hatest me the least of all,
That is the reason why.

Though we have points alike, big cat,
And "like likes like," say I;
Still we are not *too* much alike,
That is the reason why.

Drink Deep.

“DRINK deep!” The wild-eyed drunkard’s cry,
“The time, though not yet come,
To wake, and think, is drawing nigh;
One more carouse, then home!

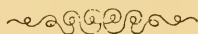
“Drink deep! The night doth close around,
With phantoms from the past.
Drain Lethe’s draughts, ’till all are drown’d
With memory, at last!

“Drink deep! The haunted gloom is flown,
But heart-aches come with day.
Another glass,—not one alone,—
To drive the mists away.

“Drink deep! High glaring noon is here,
Too late to labor now.
Crush back false hopes, drive off despair,
Forget each broken vow.

“Drink deep ! On clouds the sun lies wrecked,
Remorse, its gorgon-head
Doth raise, with serpent-horrors deck’d ;
Look not or joy is dead !

“Drink deep ! To darker depths sink still,
Lest conscience break the spell ;
Yea, soul and mind together kill,
In madness plunge to hell !”



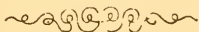
The Ideal.

IN the ideal world I live,
The beautiful,
Where from the common place, I weave
The wonderful.
If nature seems too dull, and tame,
Too tedious,
I view it but through eyes aflame
With genius.

I move with halos round me, still
 Beatified,
While all my wishes, at my will,
 Are gratified.
Sad shadows o'er the present cast,
 I fain ignore ;
But future hopes, and pleasures past,
 My thoughts explore.
Should joy be dead, I clasp its shade
 In blind delight,
While phantoms dark by me are laid
 In distant night.
No clouds obscure me, for I soar
 Above them all,
Where heaven's smiles, for ever more,
 Around me fall.
I stray there under tropic moon's
 Supernal rays,
Or bask in halcyon autumn-noon's
 Eternal days.
I clothe this life's most trivial things
 In rich romance,
And rise, and float, on solemn wings
 Of blissful trance.
I hear in poesy, and song,
 The heart's echo ;

On waves of numbers swept along,
 I glide and flow.
My every pulse throbs with the tide
 Of melody;
I sing my thoughts, my prayers are sighed
 In monody.
I lose all weary mundane cares,
 In Paradise.
On altars my devotion rears
 A sacrifice.
I love a dream,—a paragon
 With ecstasy.
Imagination trampling on
 Perplexity.
It paints a landscape,—moulds a face
 Invisible.
And gives to all the highest grace
 Admissible.
It revels, peopling every sphere
 Siderial,
With glorious visions, wondrous fair,
 Ethereal !
It waves the sceptre from the throne,
 And blessings crowd.
The souls sweet comforters alone
 Are there allowed !

I love the airy spirit train,
Thus summoned round ;
Such harmless dreams, are not in vain,
Where joy is found.



Fame.

Al! what is earthly fame ?
Reply each shining name,
That with undying flame,
Through ages still the same,
Burns on the lips, whose aim,
Is pure or heaped with blame ;
I ask *all*, what is fame ?

Fame is the trumpet's blast,
That calls men from the past
To make them names, shall cast
A light upon the vast,
To come.—Names shall stand fast.
While time's long records last.

Fame is the comet's gleam,
A mirage, a wild dream,
The glitter on a stream,
A shadow that will seem
The substance still, a beam
Where false notes often teem.

Fame's glamour leads astray,
Like phantom lights that play
O'er shallow graves; 'twill sway,
Though but to last a day.
Strong wine soon fled away
From parching lips that pray
In vain, "deceiver stay."

Look on the great who die,
Those hands that folded lie,
Can they grasp fame, tho' nigh?
But glory stored on high,
Forever in the sky,
Will death himself defy!
On this alone rely.



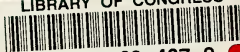


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